

BMP-29

BMP: SURFACE ROUGHENING

Definition

Providing a rough soil surface with horizontal depressions created by operating a tillage or other suitable implement on the contour, or by leaving slopes in a roughened condition by not fine-grading them.

Purposes

1. To aid in establishment of vegetative cover with seed.
2. To reduce runoff velocity and increase infiltration.
3. To reduce erosion and provide for sediment trapping.

Conditions Where Practice Applies

1. All slopes steeper than 3:1 require surface roughening, either stair-step grading, grooving, furrowing, or tracking if they are to be stabilized with vegetation.
2. Areas with grades less steep than 3:1 should have the soil surface lightly roughened and loose to a depth of 25 to 50 millimeters (2 to 4 inches) prior to seeding.
3. Areas which have been graded and will not be stabilized immediately may be roughened to reduce runoff velocity until seeding takes place.
4. Slopes with a stable rock face do not require roughening or stabilization.

Planning Considerations

Graded areas with smooth, hard surfaces give a false impression of "finished grading" and a job well done. It is difficult to establish vegetation on such surfaces due to reduced water infiltration and the potential for erosion. Rough slope surfaces with uneven soil and rocks left in place may appear unattractive or unfinished at first, but encourage water infiltration, speed the establishment of vegetation, and decrease runoff velocity.

Rough loose soil surfaces give lime, fertilizer and seed some natural coverage. Niches in the surface provide microclimates which generally provide a cooler and more favorable moisture level than hard flat surfaces; this aids seed germination.

There are different methods for achieving a roughened soil surface on a slope, and the selection of an appropriate method depends upon the type of slope.

Roughening methods include stair-step grading, grooving, and tracking. Factors to be considered in choosing a method are slope steepness, mowing requirements, and whether the slope is formed by cutting or filling.

1. Disturbed areas which will not require mowing may be stair-step graded, grooved, or left rough after filling.
2. Stair-step grading is particularly appropriate in soils containing large amounts of soft rock. Each "step" catches material which sloughs from above, and provides a level site where vegetation can become established.
3. Areas which will be mowed (these areas should have slopes less steep than 3:1) may have small furrows left by discing, harrowing, raking, or seed-planting machinery operated on the contour.
4. It is important to avoid excessive compacting of the soil surface when scarifying. Tracking with bulldozer treads is preferable to not roughening at all, but is not as effective as other forms of roughening, as the soil surface is severely compacted and runoff is increased.

Specifications

Cut Slope Applications For Areas Which Will Not Be Mowed -

Cut slopes with a gradient steeper than 3:1 shall be stair-step graded or grooved (Figures 29-1 and 29-2).

1. Stair-step grading may be carried out on any material soft enough to be ripped with a bulldozer. Slopes consisting of soft rock with some subsoil are particularly suited to stair-step grading.

The ratio of the vertical cut distance to the horizontal distance shall be less than 1:1 and the horizontal portion of the "step" shall slope toward the vertical wall.

Individual vertical cuts shall not be more than 75 millimeters (30 inches) on soft soil materials and not more than 1,000 millimeters (40 inches) in rocky materials.

FIGURE 29-1: STAIR STEPPING CUT SLOPES

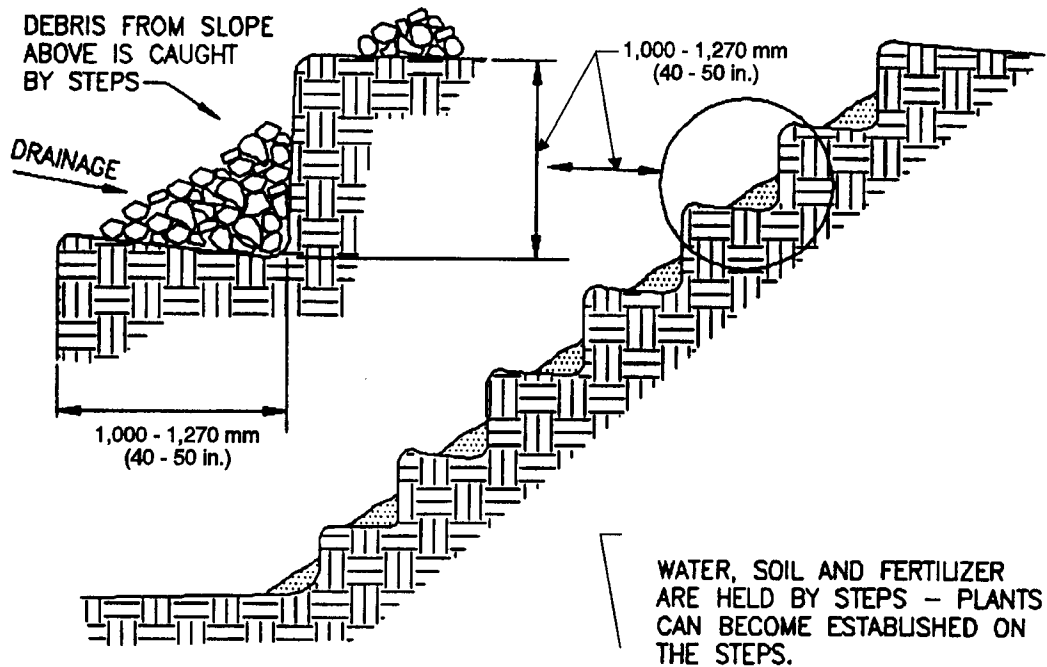


FIGURE 29-2: GROOVING SLOPES

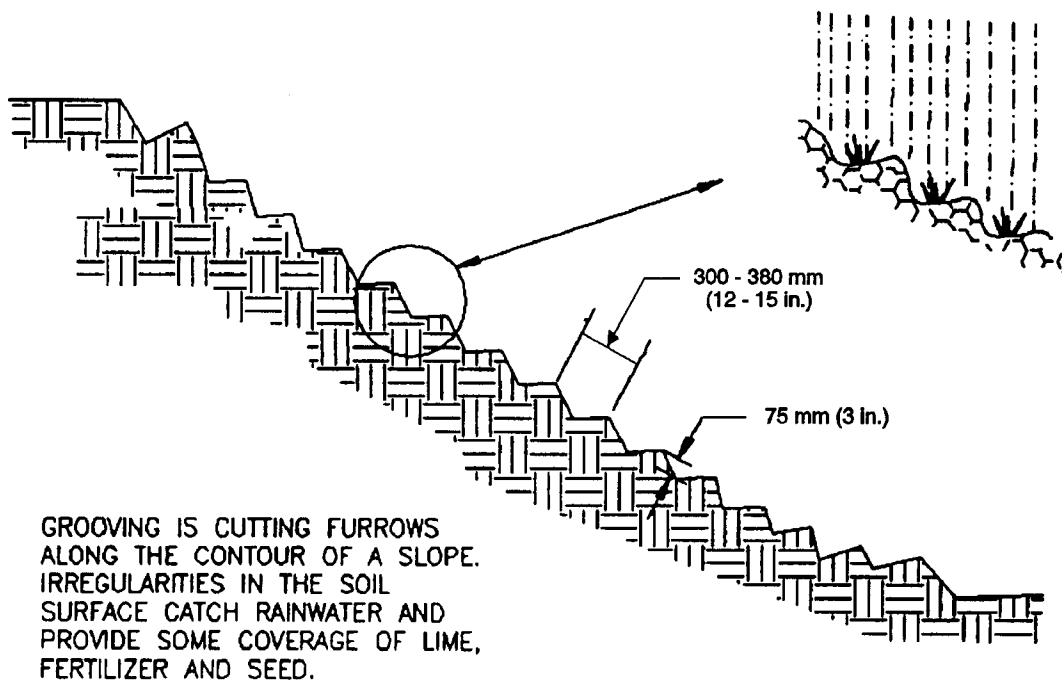
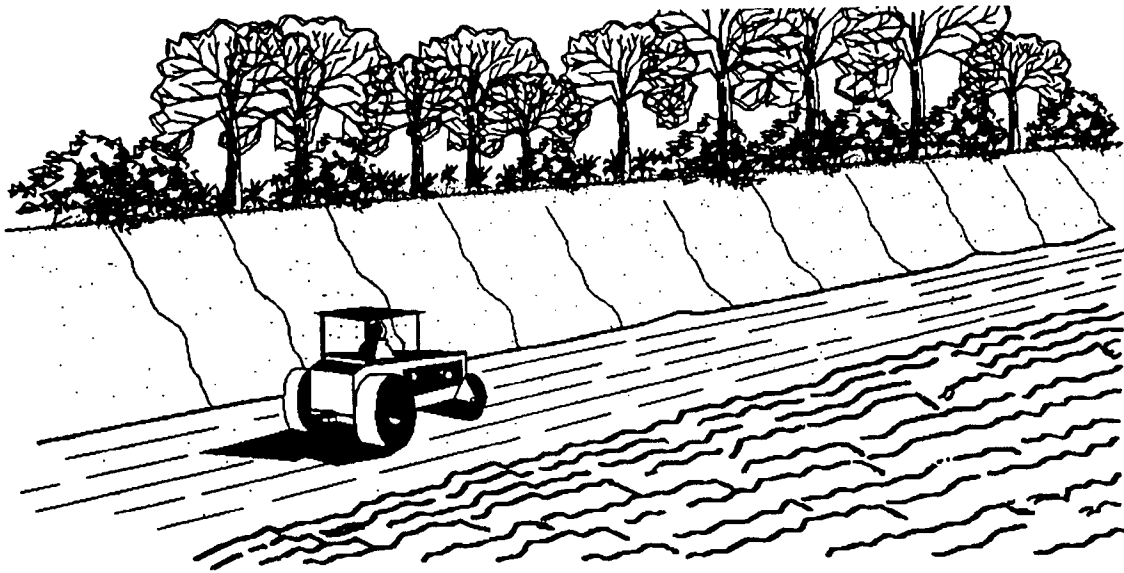
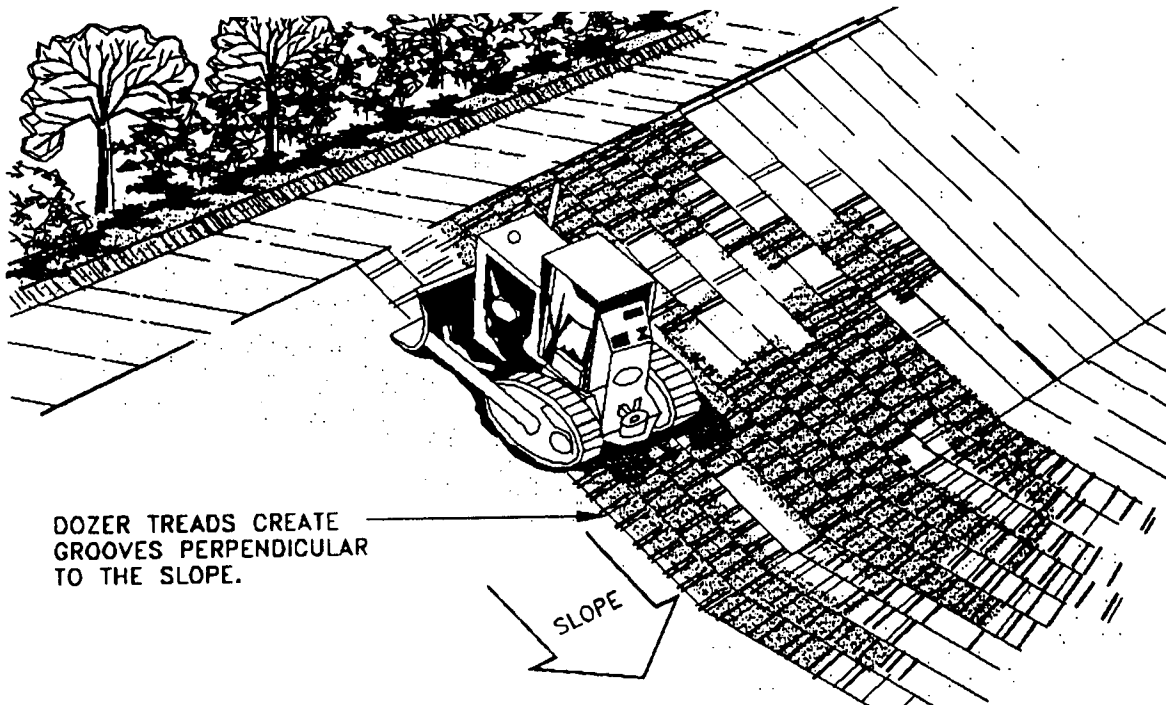


FIGURE 29-3: FILL SLOPE TREATMENT



EACH LIFT OF THE FILL IS COMPACTED, BUT THE OUTER FACE OF THE SLOPE IS ALLOWED TO REMAIN LOOSE SO THAT THE ROCKS, CLODS, ETC. REACH THE NATURAL ANGLE OF REPOSE.

FIGURE 29-4: TRACKING



DOZER TREADS CREATE GROOVES PERPENDICULAR TO THE SLOPE.

2. Grooving consists of using machinery to create a series of ridges and depressions which run perpendicular to the slope (on the contour).

Grooves may be made with any appropriate implement which can be safely operated on the slope and which will not cause undue compaction.

Suggested implements include discs, tillers, spring harrows, and the teeth on a front-end loader bucket. Such grooves shall not be less than 75 millimeters (3 inches) deep nor further than 400 millimeters (15 inches) apart.

Fill Slope Applications For Areas Which Will Not Be Mowed -

Fill slopes with a gradient steeper than 3:1 shall be grooved or allowed to remain rough as they are constructed. Method (1) or (2) below may be used.

1. Groove according to #2 above.
2. As lifts of the fill are constructed, soil and rock materials may be allowed to fall naturally onto the slope surface (see Figure 29-3).

Colluvial materials (soil deposits at the base of slopes or from old stream beds) shall not be used in fills as they flow when saturated.

At no time shall slopes be bladed or scraped to produce a smooth, hard surface.

Cuts Fills, and Graded Areas Which Will Be Mowed -

Mowed slopes should not be steeper than 3:1. Excessive roughness is undesirable where mowing is planned. These areas may be roughened with shallow grooves such as remain after tilling, discing, harrowing, raking, or use of a cultipacker-seeder. The final pass of any such tillage implement shall be on the contour (perpendicular to the slope).

Grooves formed by such implements shall be not less than 25 millimeter (1-inch) deep and not further than 30 millimeters (12-inches) apart. Fill slopes which are left rough as constructed may be smoothed with a dragline or pickchain to facilitate mowing.

Roughening With Tracked Machinery (see Figure 29-4) -

Roughening with tracked machinery on clayey soils is not recommended unless no alternatives are available. Undue compaction of surface soil results from this practice. Sandy soils do not compact severely, and may be tracked. In no case is tracking as effective as the other roughening methods described.

When tracking is the chosen surface roughening technique, it shall be done by operating tracked machinery up and down the slope to leave horizontal depressions in the soil. As few passes of the machinery should be made as possible to minimize compaction.

Seeding -

Roughened areas shall be seeded and mulched as soon as possible to obtain optimum seed germination and seedling growth.